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ABSTRACT

Dance education provides an opportunity for aerobic exercise and conditioning that is especially appealing to many girls. Dance may act as an outlet for girls and give them confidence, but, at the same time, it may create risks associated with perceived body-image. The benefits of taking dance classes were examined for girls, ages 13-20, enrolled in classes in three schools in Pennsylvania. Frequency distributions illustrated that the majority of dance students (92%) reported that dance improved their discipline. Almost all dancers disagreed with the idea that dance made them hate their bodies, while 88% agreed that it helped them release their feelings. Almost all participants failed to report feeling anxious or worried at dance classes, and 77% felt better about themselves after dancing. The hypothesis that girls with greater dance experience would have higher self-esteem is somewhat supported by the results. The personality analysis revealed that extraverts made greater use of dance classes as a means of emotional expression. The parental support findings suggest that there is a congruence between girls' and their parents' attitudes toward this activity. For the 8% of girls who did find that dance classes made their lives hectic, they experienced more stress and anxiety. (Contains 15 references.) (JDM)

The Benefits Associated with Dance Education for Adolescent Girls

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2001

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Abstract

This study examined the benefits of taking dance classes for girls ages 13-20 years. The mean age of participants was 14.84 years. Multiple factors were assessed using a survey composed of several sections. General background information assessing age, grade, number of years of dance education, number of years at particular dance schools, sibling gender, and whether siblings were also involved in dance were obtained. The following variables were evaluated using four point Likert-format items (4= strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree): self-esteem, body-image, dance ability, and peer and parent relationships. Information on behavior in preparation before dance classes and inhibitions about dancing in front of others was obtained using a five point Likert-format scale, (item scores ranged from 5= always to 1= never.). The girls were also asked to rate their dance ability, their attractiveness as compared to other girls in school, and several emotions experienced while dancing. This was done using a ten point scale (10- highest and 1= lowest.). To assess extraversion, the 22-item Extraversion subscale of the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1963) was used. An open ended question about the influence of dance education concluded the survey. The hypothesis for this study was that subjects with more dance experience would have higher levels of perceived success, attractiveness, body-awareness, and time management skills. Extraversion was expected to mediate these effects. Future research on the attitudes of dance students versus non-dance students is planned in order to extend this work on the effects of dance instruction.

Introduction

Dance education provides an opportunity for aerobic exercise and conditioning that is especially appealing to many girls. Physical activity is important for health reasons and contributes to the overall well-being of an individual. Programs that offer physical activity have been shown to aid in the development of positive psychological and physical attributes (Kravitz and Furst, 1991). Exercise was identified by the U.S. Public Health Service as one of the 15 behavioral interventions most likely to reduce death and disease. (Wraith & Duncan, 1991). Wraith and Duncan found that exercise involvement enhanced both physical and psychological well-being. In regards to the physical benefits, exercise reduces cardiovascular risk factors such as obesity, hypertension, and elevated blood lipids. Psychologically, the evidence is less compelling, however, "a number of reports suggest that exercise is related to the reduction of symptoms of depression in healthy adults and possibly improves feelings of self-esteem, body image, and perceptions of control" (Wraith & Duncan, 1991). Wraith and Duncan found that perceptions of competence contributed to perceived efficacy, and that highly efficacious individuals appear to be more intrinsically motivated to participate in various forms of exercise. Intrinsic motivation appeared to be heightened by presentation of demanding tasks with high perceived potential for mastery by the participant. Challenging, but not overwhelmingly difficult, tasks seem to provide the greatest satisfaction to those involved with physical exercise. Such participation apparently leads to increases in self-efficacy, which in turn positively influences intrinsic motivation and results in participation for less external reasons (Wraith & Duncan, 1991).

Body image is of great concern to females in our culture, and dance is often seen as a way of improving both physical fitness and grace. Participating in dance may be a way of addressing specific vulnerabilities associated with adolescent girls. Previous research on adolescent girls has indicated that many of them are at high risk of self-consciousness, fragile body-image, and feelings of inferiority. In response to these problems, many girls become less assertive and quite uncomfortable in public situations. Dance education may provide one way of maintaining girls' comfort with their bodies and increasing their perceived efficacy and intrinsic motivation for remaining physically active.

Pipher (1994) and Hoff-Sommers (2000) have articulated differing views of the plight of adolescent girls; stirring up a bit of a controversy over whether the risks faced by young girls in our culture have been exaggerated. Pipher (1994) depicts teenaged girls as vulnerable to reduced self esteem for a variety of reasons. Society, advertising, and sexism in a male dominated world often contribute to the loss of self-esteem many young girls experience. Pipher argues that a girl's transition into adolescence marks the beginning of a multitude of changes, both physically and cognitively. Pipher sees girls as going one of four ways during adolescence; they can conform, withdraw, be depressed, or get angry. "Many girls lose contact with their true selves, and when they do, they become extraordinarily vulnerable to a culture that is all too happy to use them for its purposes" (Pipher, 1994, p.44).

According to Pipher, the reasons for these changes can be identified through the different dimensions of the self. The physical self is changing in size, shape, and hormonal structure. Girls are suddenly more aware of societal standards, and begin to feel pressured to look thin and be beautiful. Emotionally, adolescent girls are intense, dynamic, and

easily upset, "The emotional system is immature in early adolescence. Emotions are extreme and changeable" (Pipher, 1994, p. 57). The third dimension of self, thinking, involves difficulties because early adolescents have trouble thinking abstractly. As a result, reasoning with them is a struggle. Overpersonalizing stares and casual remarks is often problematic during this stage of life. The academic self faces challenges in school, where Pipher contends that boys are treated differently than girls. "In classes, boys are twice as likely to be seen as role models, five times as likely to receive teachers' attention, and twelve times as likely to speak up in class" (Pipher, 1994, p. 62). The differences in treatment, as well as expectations (for boys: clever, brave and resourceful, for girls: kind, dependant and docile) create discrimination in many school settings. The social self confronts challenges with both family and peers. Parents try to protect their daughters and often unknowingly limit their independence. Social pressures are applied by peers on teens to separate from parental figures and to become autonomous. Girls have difficulties because they simultaneously want to be close to their parents, yet want acceptance from their peers. "Peers validate their decisions and support their new independent selves" (Pipher, 1994 p. 67). Many parents report that their daughters pick fights with their parents and hate being touched by them. The last dimension of self discussed by Pipher is the spiritual self. Pipher sees adolescence as a time of religious crisis and exploration of universal questions, mainly about death and suffering. She notes that during this developmental period, girls tend either to become deeply religious or temporarily abandon practicing religion. According to Pipher, conflicts relating to these various aspects of self make adolescence one of the roughest times of life for many females.

On the other hand, Hoff-Sommers (2000) has challenged the notion that girls are more vulnerable to conflict and its resulting distress than boys. In her book, *The War Against Boys*, she expresses her thoughts about this issue.

It's a bad time to be a boy in America. As the century drew to a close, the defining event for girls was the triumph of the U.S. women's soccer team. For boys, the symbolic event was the mass killing at Columbine High School. It would seem that boys in our society are greatly at risk. Yet the best known studies and the academic experts say that it's girls who are suffering from a decline in self-esteem. It's girls, they say, who need extra help in school and elsewhere in a society that favors boys. The problem with boys is that they are boys, say the experts. We need to change their nature. We have to make them more like...girls. (Hoff-Sommers, 2000, p. I).

Hoff-Sommers challenges both Pipher (1994) and Gilligan's (1990) contention that adolescent girls are in crisis more so than boys. Hoff-Sommers sites empirical findings showing higher levels of well-being among adolescent girls than among boys. She challenges the validity of many of Pipher and Gilligan's conclusions. Hoff-Sommers points out that Pipher based her characterization of adolescent girls on specific cases which may not be generalizable to the population at large.

Hoff-Sommers reports findings that support the notion that boys are having more difficulty in high school than girls. Statistics show that more girls than boys are taking AP exams during their senior year of high school (144 females vs 117 males per 1000 12th graders). Secondly, more female than male students currently enroll in high level math and science courses in high school. Similarly, more girls than boys are involved in extracurricular activities in high school, with the exception of team sports.

Girls read more books. They outperform males on tests of artistic and musical ability. More girls than boys study abroad. More join the Peace Corps. Conversely, more boys than girls are suspended from school. More are held back and more drop out. Boys are three times as likely as girls to be enrolled in special education programs and four times as likely to be diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). More boys than girls are

involved in crime, alcohol and drugs. Girls attempt suicide more than boys, but it is boys who actually kill themselves more often. In a typical year (1997), there were 4,493 suicides of young people between the ages of five and twenty-four: 701 females, 3,792 males. (Hoff-Sommers, 2000, p. 25-26).

This particular data was collected from the U.S. Department of Education and various universities in the country.

Regardless of whether adolescence is differentially challenging for males and females, Pipher, Gilligan, and Hoff-Sommers all agree that adolescence is a difficult time for many individuals. Tumultuous changes that occur affect relationships and academic performance. The need for self expression seems to mount during this dynamic phase of life. Ideally, if self-expression can be achieved in a constructive manner, adolescents may not feel as much pressure to choose destructive ways of defining their identities. Dance may offer many girls a vehicle for such positive self expression.

Body Image Research

Body image is of concern to many researchers, and new ways of measuring perceived body image have been developed recently (Campbell and Chow, 2000). The difficulty lies with the reliability and validity of such tests, since participants' subjectivity can sway the results. Despite these measurement challenges, the determinants of body image continue to be investigated. Stowers and Durm (1996) looked at gender to determine differences in body image. A total of 36 subjects, 18 male and 18 female, were tested using the Tennessee Self-concept scale for body image and self-concept (Fitts, 1965), to assess differences between male and female participants. Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between scores on the Physical Self subscale and the total score of the Tennessee Self-concept Scale (women, $r = .75$ and men, $r =$

.70). Results show that there were significant and positive correlations between measures of body image and self concept within each gender. Overall, women were found to be significantly less satisfied with their body image than men, which is consistent with prior research. This supports the need for activities for girls to address their body image problems.

A few researchers have explored the effects of dance on adolescent girls' self image. Body image has been an area of specific interest because of the risks associated with a poor body image. Radell, Adame and Johnson studied body image and locus on control using a two-group design; (dancers versus non-dancers). Both the Winstead and Cash 54-item Body Self-relations Questionnaire (Winstead and Cash, 1984) and the Adult Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Control Scale (Nowicki, 1991) were administered to 32 college students in a dance class and 26 students enrolled in a personal health class. Physical aesthetics (appearance), physical competence (fitness), and biological integrity (health), were components of the Body image Scale. The survey consisted of 54 Likert-style items (1= definitely disagree and 5= definitely agree). For the locus of control survey, subjects answered yes or no to items. Both a pretest, (presented during second and third weeks of the semester), and post test, (presented during the final week of the semester) were given.

Dancers scored more internally on locus of control in the pretest than non-dancers, but there were no significant differences between groups on the post test. Subjects, overall, scored more internally on the pretest than on the post test. Dancers' fitness evaluation scores went from low to high over the semester, whereas non-dancers' scores went from high to low. Increasing scholastic demands may have affected post test scores.

Another possible explanation for the differences in the fitness orientation subscale of the Body-Self Relations Questionnaire was that dancers' "physical, mental and creative talents, coupled with actual involvement in the dance experience, result in a fuller perception of the demands of dance activities and leads to a more realistic vision of their developmental level in the creative movement arts" (Radell et al, 1993 p.512).

Similarly, Lewis and Scannell (1995) conducted a study on the relationship between body image and participation in creative dance movement activities. This study included 112 women ranging in age from 18-69, who had been participating in dance courses for periods of time ranging from 2 weeks to 16.5 years. The data suggested that subjects with more experience in creative dance movement classes were more satisfied with their appearance, fitness, and body parts than those subjects with less than five years of experience. Lewis and Scannell note that given these findings and the potential for incorporating creative dance movement experience in a clinical setting for people with body-image disturbances, additional empirical research on this relationship between creative dance movement and body image is warranted (Lewis and Scannell, 1995).

Sandra Minton (2000) sought to link a multitude of studies together in order to demonstrate the relationship between self-esteem and dance involvement. Minton reviewed 24 studies conducted between 1973 and 1999, testing participants from various educational levels. Different dance forms included in these studies were: creative/explorative, ethnic/folk, aerobic and ballroom, plus a specially designed general dance curricula. The majority of these studies found creative or explorative dance to have positive effects on the psychological variables studied. Similarly, research involving

aerobic dance (Kamal and Blais, 1995); ethnic and folk dance (Trujillo, 1979); and ballroom dance (Taylor, 1977) produced significant benefits (Minton, 2000).

According to Minton, these findings could be due to a sense of connectedness to others experienced while dancing. In fact, other researchers have found that students identified a sense of belonging and connectedness with dance exploration. Minton's study in 1999 showed a significant improvement in social self-esteem among students who enrolled in just one dance class. It was also found that dance improves the physical aspects of self-concept (Trujillo 1979, in Minton 2000). In most of the 24 studies Minton reviewed, dance positively affected self-concept.

Dance also provides a means of expressing feelings and emotions. A study on Indian dance considered nine primary emotions and modes of expressing them through dance. These emotions were anger, disgust, fear, heroism, humor-amusement, love, peace, sadness and wonder (B.B., 2000). "Natives of both the United States and India shown videotapes of these dances identified the emotions accurately in two out of three trials, a new study finds (B.B., 2000). Videotapes were watched in random order by a total of 48 U.S. college students, ages 18-25, and 47 Hindu Indians, ages 18-40. Ten emotions were listed including the nine referred to earlier plus a "neutral/no emotion" option. Due to cultural differences and awareness of cultural dance, Indian volunteers more often detected the portrayals of shame-embarrassment, peace and heroism. It is suggested that those emotions may have more meaning in Indian dance and Indian culture. Researchers have also explored strategies for maintaining participation in dance activities. Much of this work is based on college-aged samples. In a study examining 254 female and 11 male young adults, McAuley et al (1991) found perceived success to

enhance intrinsic motivation to participate in aerobic dance activities. In a University setting, Kravitz and Furst (1991) found use of extrinsic rewards to improve aerobic dance class attendance.

The purpose of the current study was to examine the correlates of adolescent girls' involvement in formal dance training. Dance may act as an outlet for adolescent girls and give them confidence, but at the same time it may pose some risks associated with perceived body-image. Despite considerable conjuncture about the positive impact of dance participants, some have expressed concerns about the higher ratio of eating disorders among dancers than nondancers, and prevalence of negative body image among dancers. This has led to debates over whether dance classes have a positive or negative effect on students' body image. It is hypothesized that adolescent girls benefit from taking dance classes, however, each may do so in a different fashion. For instance, improvements associated with exercise, coordination and time management may help to shape a young girl into a more responsible young woman. On the other hand, some girls may benefit from working collectively with peers and enjoying the social aspects that dance class provides. In addition, girls who rate themselves as more talented dancers are expected to have higher self-esteem than girls who feel they are not quite as talented.

Methods

Subjects were adolescent girls ranging in age from 13-20, enrolled in dance classes from three different dance schools in Pennsylvania. The mean age of participants was 14.84 and the total number of participants was 26. Multiple factors were assessed using a survey composed of several sections. General background information assessing.

including age, grade, number of years they have taken dance lessons, number of years they have been at the same dance school, sibling gender, and whether their sibling was involved in dance. The following variables were evaluated using a four point Likert-format scale (4= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree): self-esteem, body-image, dance ability, and peer and parent relationships. Information on behavior in preparation before dance classes and inhibitions about dancing in front of others was obtained using a five point Likert-format scale. (Item scores ranged from 5= always to 1= never.) The girls were also asked to rate their dance ability, their attractiveness as compared to other girls in school, and several emotions experienced while dancing. This was done using a ten point scale (10= highest and 1= lowest). To assess extraversion, the 22-item Extraversion subscale from the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck ,1963) was used. An optional open ended question addressed what dance has meant to the subject.

The survey was distributed to students attending three different dance schools, ranging in age, ability and dance experience. Participants were enrolled in one or more different dance forms, including jazz, ballet, pointe, tap and modern.

Results

Frequency distributions illustrated that the majority of dance students, (92%), reported that dance improved their discipline. In reference to dance helping students' release their feelings, 88% agreed. Almost all dance students, 92%, disagreed that dance makes them hate their body. Likewise, only 8% said that dance made their life extremely hectic, leaving the remaining 92% to disagree that dance makes like extremely hectic.

Almost all participants failed to report feeling anxious or worried at dance, 96% didn't feel worried, 4% felt worried and anxious. Another 88% felt that dance helped to improve

their concentration and 85% reported feeling more confident while dancing. In regards to the item about feeling better about one's self after dancing, 77% felt better as compared to 23% not feeling better.

A median split was used to create low and high dance experience groups.

Between group t-tests showed that girls with greater experience reported greater enjoyment while performing in front of an audience than those with low experience (high dance experience: $\bar{x} = 3.87$, $s.d = .35$, $n=15$ versus low dance experience: $\bar{x} = 3.09$, $s.d = .70$, $n=11$; $t = 3.72$, $df = 24$, $p < .001$). Girls with more dance experience also reported feeling more confident while dancing than those with less dance experience (more dance experience: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $s.d = 1.25$, $n = 15$ versus less dance experience: $\bar{x} = 6.36$, $s.d = 1.36$, $n = 11$; $t = 3.17$, $df = 24$, $p < .004$). Girls with greater experience also reported practicing dance at home alone more than girls with less experience (greater experience: $\bar{x} = 4.13$, $s.d = .83$, $n = 15$ versus less experience: $\bar{x} = 3.27$, $s.d = 1.10$, $n = 11$; $t = 2.27$, $df = 24$, $p < .03$). Girls with greater dance experience also felt happier at dance class than those with less experience (high dance experience: $\bar{x} = 3.67$, $s.d = .49$, $n=15$ versus low dance experience: $\bar{x} = 3.27$, $s.d = .47$, $n=11$; $t = 2.07$, $df = 24$, $p < .05$). No significant group differences were found on measures of comfort with one's appearance whether dance helped one organize time, or whether dance acted as a mechanism for releasing feelings.

Next, a median split was used to create low and high dance efficacy groups.

Between group t-tests showed that girls with higher dance efficacy reported learning greater discipline through taking dance lessons than those with low dance efficacy (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 3.13$, $s.d = .99$, $n=15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 3.82$, $s.d = .40$,

$n=11$, $t= 2.16$, $df= 24$, $p<.04$). Girls with high dance efficacy were less likely to see class as making them critical of their bodies than those with lower dance efficacy (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 1.20$, $s.d= .41$, $n= 15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 1.82$, $s.d= .75$, $n= 11$; $t= 2.69$, $df= 24$, $p<.01$). Girls with high dance efficacy reported being embarrassed less in class by the dance teacher than those with low dance efficacy (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 1.20$, $s.d= .41$, $n= 15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 1.64$, $s.d= .67$, $n= 11$; $t= 2.04$, $df= 24$, $p< .05$). Feeling comfortable around peers at dance was rated higher by those with high dance efficacy than low dance efficacy (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 3.53$, $s.d= .52$, $n= 15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 3.09$, $s.d= .54$, $n= 11$; $t= -2.119$, $df= 24$, $p<.045$). In addition, those girls who rated their dance ability as high reported feeling more relaxed at dance than those who rated their dance ability as low (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 8.27$, $s.d= 1.22$, $n= 15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 6.55$, $s.d= 2.34$, $n= 11$; $t= 2.44$, $df= 24$, $p<.02$). Girls who reported high dance efficacy also tended to be younger than girls who reported low dance efficacy (high dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 14.33$, $s.d= 1.35$, $n= 15$ versus low dance efficacy: $\bar{x} = 15.55$, $s.d= 1.63$, $n= 11$; $t= 2.07$, $df= 24$, $p<.05$).

In the next set of analyses, a median split was performed on the extraversion scale scores to divide the sample into two groups (introverts and extraverts). Between group t-tests were used to compare introverts on measures of perceived body image and feelings while dancing. Girls who were extraverts reported that dance class made them hate their body moreso than introverts (extraverts: $\bar{x} = 1.67$, $s.d= .72$, $n= 15$ versus introverts: $\bar{x} = 1.18$, $s.d= .40$, $n= 11$; $t= 2.00$, $df= 24$, $p< .05$). In addition, extraverts reported dance

class as helping them to release their feelings more so than introverts (extraverts: $\bar{x} = 3.40$, s.d. = .51, n = 15 versus introverts: $\bar{x} = 2.91$, s.d. = .70, n = 11; $t = 2.08$, $df = 24$, $p < .50$).

Participants' perception of their parents' support of their dancing was significantly positively associated with subjects' reports of happiness during dance class ($r = .70$, $p < .01$), feeling content while dancing ($r = .68$, $p < .01$), and feeling special while dancing ($r = .51$, $p < .01$). Participants' perception of their parents' support of dance was significantly negatively related to dance class' interference with homework ($r = -.53$, $p < .01$).

Several significant relationships were found that involved participants' social life in school. Having better relationships with peers at school because of dance was positively associated with having more fun at school dances ($r = .63$, $p < .01$). Relationships with peers at school were also correlated with how attractive the participant felt at school ($r = .45$, $p < .05$) and at dance ($r = .56$, $P < .01$). Comfort with peers at dance was also positively correlated with the participants comfort with their own appearance ($r = .56$, $p < .01$).

Confidence was positively correlated with dance efficacy ($r = .53$, $p < .01$) as well as feeling let down after recital time is over ($r = .50$, $p < .01$). Subjects who felt that dance helped their concentration abilities were more likely to report being able to memorize dance steps ($r = .68$, $p < .01$). There was also a relationship between dance class' helping memorization skills and reports of feeling better overall after going to dance class ($r = .59$, $p < .01$). A significantly positive correlation was found between feeling anxious and worried at dance class' and dance class making life more hectic for the participant ($r = .63$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

The overwhelming majority of students (92%), see dance class as having improved their discipline. More adolescent girls felt that dance class helped them to release their feelings, which may be attributed to the effects of exercise and aesthetic appreciation. Another benefit was that 92% felt that dance does not make them hate their bodies. The majority of girls did not feel that dance contributed to the way in which they perceive their bodies. Similarly, many girls felt that dance did not make their lives hectic (92%); which may relate to an even less percentage (96%) reporting that they did not at all feel worried or anxious during dance class. Most girls felt that dance class improved both their concentration and confidence. Roughly a quarter of dance students don't feel better about themselves after dancing. On the other hand, the remaining 77% did report this beneficial effect.

The hypothesis that girls with greater dance experience would have higher self-esteem is somewhat supported by the results. Girls who were more experienced appeared to have greater confidence in their dancing ability and were more likely to enjoy performing in front of an audience. This comfort could also stem from the fact that they practice more at home alone than those girls with less experience. In general being more experienced in the dance class setting may cause these girls to be happier at dance class than those who are less experienced and more self-conscious. The predictors that greater experience would tend to relate to greater comfort with appearance was not supported. Similarly, girls who scored high on dance efficacy, (based on rating their own dance ability,) seemed to be less intimidated by their own bodies while dancing, felt less anxious and self-conscious around both teachers and peers during class.

The personality analysis revealed that extraverts make greater use of dance class as a means of emotional expression and release than introverts. This is consistent with extraverts' generally higher comfort with social situations; presumably extraverts felt freer to "let loose" within this social context. However, the extravert were also more likely to report feeling negatively about their bodies during dance class, despite the fact that no significance in overall ratings of attractiveness were found across the groups. Further research on how temperamentally different girls reported to dance instruction may help to differentiate its benefits more precisely.

The parental support findings support that there is a congruence between girls' and their parents' attitudes toward this activity. Girls who most enjoy dance class, have parents who most support it. The fact that parents are more supportive in cases where dance class is most reinforcing for daughters and is not seen as interfering with homework seems understandable. It is also possible that parental support enhances a girl's enjoyment of this pursuit. Future research using longitudinal methods could assess whether parental support exerts a causal influence upon a girl's dance experience, or whether parental attitudes are a consequence of a girl's reactions to dance.

The generalizability of dance benefits are assessed in part by exploring students' school experiences. It was found that girls who credited dance with improving their peer relations enjoyed school dances more. These girls were more likely to feel attractive, both at school and at dance class. Dance efficacy was related to overall confidence, suggesting that the benefits of dance instruction are not simply situation-specific.

In assessing the potential harms of dance instruction, the tendency for class to produce feelings of anxiety and stressfulness were explored. Some students did seem to

find that dance class made life hectic, and these girls were more likely to be anxious during class. This finding may indicate that not all girls benefit from this experience, or it may be attributable to personality variability; some girls may be more susceptible to stress and anxiety than others, regardless of their decision to dance. Future research with a larger sample would enable further differentiation of the advantages and disadvantages of adolescent girls' participation in dance class.

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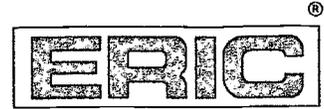
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